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TAGS: OPRC KMDR TU PREL KPAO  
SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2009

In Today's Papers

National Security Council Supports Continuation of The AKP Government's 'Kurdish Initiative'  
Media outlets report the National Security Council (MGK) has advised the government to continue with its 'Kurdish initiative' at Thursday's seven-hour meeting chaired by President Abdullah Gul. MGK said in a statement the "initiative" should continue on the condition that Turkey's unitary structure is preserved. The statement also said that on Iraq, the three-party mechanism between Turkey, Iraq and the U.S. was "reviewed" in the light of developments, and underlined that contacts with the Iraqi groups were "useful."

MHP, CHP Reactions To 'Kurdish Initiative' Continue  
Media outlets report opposition MHP leader Devlet Bahceli strongly reacted to the AKP government's 'Kurdish move,' which he said would amount to the "destruction of the unitary state." "What the government is trying to do is to put martyrs and killers, security forces and terrorists, into the same basket. The PM got into the same picture with Mount Kandil, tribal leaders and separatists. They want us, too, but let it be known that we will never be a part of this game," Bahceli said in a statement Thursday.

The main opposition CHP's Algan Hacaloglu said the so-called "democratic initiative" was merely a "show" made by the ruling AKP. "If you have something concrete, just tell us so that we can make a contribution," Hacaloglu called on the AKP.

Meanwhile, papers report opposition DSP leader Masum Turker called on President Abdullah Gul to hold a meeting with the leaders of all political parties to further discuss possible solutions to the Kurdish question.

Saadet Party Makes Public Its 'Kurdish Report'  
Papers report that on Thursday, the Islamist Saadet Party (SP) leader Numan Kurtulmus made public in Diyarbakir a "Kurdish Report" prepared by his party. The report says the PM must apologize to the martyrs' families, for the murders committed by "deep state," and for unaccounted murders as well as to torture victims. It calls that a parliamentary committee must be set up to investigate the

tortures at Diyarbakir prison. It says the PKK members must be given a chance to return to "normal life," and adds the PKK must lay down its arms unconditionally, and calls an end to military operations. The report also says education in and the usage of mother tongue was a "basic right."

#### Editorial Commentary on the Government's Democratic Initiative

Oktay Eksi wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "Today, in Turkey, if you don't support the government's democratic process, you can be called a traitor. I support the process but still have difficulty understanding why everyone is expected to support it. MHP leader Bahceli's criticism of the process might be too harsh. But he is not obliged to be as patient as the rest of us. He has concerns that the government can easily sacrifice the national interests, therefore, he wants to warn everybody before it is too late. What could be wrong with this?"

Fikret Bila wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Even though the government kept saying that their interlocutor on the Kurdish issue is not Imrali but the people of Turkey, they still keep one ear open towards Imrali. They expected a moderate statement from Ocalan with support for the unity of the country because by talking like that he would strengthen the governments hand regarding the initiative. However, this did not happen and Ocalan asked for a separate Kurdish state. This definitely disappointed the government and narrowed their field of action."

Cengiz Candar wrote in liberal Radikal: "Democracy and freedom are the only elements to bring Turks, Kurds and all the people of Turkey

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together."

Gungor Mengi wrote in mainstream Vatan: "Democratic move can be realized by freeing Kurdish origin people from the terrorist organization through economic and cultural rights. All the parties in the parliament should mend the bridges and find a solution together. It is not possible to find solutions to eliminate separatist terrorist organizations in a separated parliament."

Mumtazer Turkone wrote in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "Ataturk's words "How happy it is to say one is a Turk" could be seen everywhere on the mountains of Turkey. Do you think the people in the southeast feel happy when they read these words? Those words should be engraved not on the mountains but on the peoples' minds and souls. If one tries to make others accept certain things by force and threat, then, the will to live together will be eliminated by them. Everything one says should serve to common approval."

#### An Election In Spite of The Taliban (Sabah)

Most media are far from hailing yesterday's elections in Afghanistan as a success, but some note that those who did turn out to vote defied the Taliban's threats. Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "The Taliban Wave Crashes the Afghan Elections." Liberal Radikal says, "It's Not An Election in Afghanistan, It's A Joke," as, "The elections took place under a wave of Taliban attacks and there was a very low turnout." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports in "Democracy Under the Shadow of Violence," that "The Afghan public did not show a large turnout due to the Taliban's threats, violence, and corruption." In contrast, some media are more optimistic. Mainstream Milliyet headlines, "Democracy Defeats The Taliban," but the paper notes, "not even 50% turned out to vote." Mainstream Hurriyet praises Afghan women for defying the Taliban's threats in "Afghan Women Were Not Scared of The Taliban," as, "Despite the Taliban's calls for a boycott, women in burkas lined up and voted in the elections." Hurriyet also hails Afghan women for "going to the ballot box to vote for change." Leftist Taraf reports, "Despite the fact that the Taliban threatened to cut the fingers off those who voted, Afghans went to the polls."

The CIA Rented Triggermen Against Al Qaeda (Hurriyet)  
Leftist Taraf headlines, "Blackwater is the 'Dirty Work' Contractor," and the paper reports "Blackwater was hired by the CIA to 'hunt' Al Qaeda in Iraq." Islamist-oriented Zaman headlines, "The CIA Rented Blackwater for An Assassination Program," and the

article says, "Blackwater, the private U.S. security firm known for committing bloody acts, agreed to kill top level Al Qaeda commanders." In "An Agreement Between Blackwater and The CIA," leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "A Contractor Was Assigned to Al Qaeda." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports, "The CIA paid millions of dollars to Blackwater," but "Among the reasons why CIA Director Leon Panetta put an end to this program is that it's not looked upon warmly that the CIA hired an outside firm," to target Al Qaeda. Haberturk headlines, "Blackwater, The CIA's Triggermen."

TV News (CNN Turk)

#### Domestic

- The military General Staff (TGS) has declared some areas in Tunceli province as 'temporary security zones' from August 23 to November 23.
- On September 1, the DTP will hold a meeting in Diyarbakir to bring together writers, academics and artists who support the efforts for the resolution of the Kurdish issue.
- DSP leader Masum Turker has called on President Abdullah Gul to hold a meeting with party leaders to discuss the AKP government's 'Kurdish initiative.'
- On Tuesday, President Abdullah Gul will host a Ramadan

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fast-breaking dinner for 300 relatives of martyred soldiers, police officers and village guards.

- There was no agreement in Thursday's third round of collective bargaining talks between the government and labor unions.
- Turkey's Central Bank expects the yearend inflation to stand at 5.94 percent.

#### World

- The Iraqi deputy PM Barham Saleh has resigned to become the prime minister of the Kurdish autonomous region of northern Iraq.
- Scottish authorities to free a terminally ill Abdel Basset al-Megrahi, a former Libyan intelligence agent who was serving a life sentence in a Scottish prison for 1988 Lockerbie plane bombing.
- Iran's defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi will reportedly set up a satellite TV network.
- Internationally acclaimed Kurdish singer Sivan Perwer has been "mistakenly" taken into custody in Toronto.

SILLIMAN